

**State and Local Agency Correspondence**

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

STATEWIDE DESIGN & ENGINEERING SERVICES  
SOUTHEAST REGION PRECONSTRUCTION - DESIGN

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7999  
PHONE (907) 465-1774  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-2016

July 24, 2003

Re: Gravina Access  
Project No. 67698

Judith Bittner  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Alaska Office of History and Archaeology  
550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

Subject: Area of Potential Effect, Determinations of Eligibility, Determination of Effect

Dear Ms. Bittner:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), with funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is developing a project to improve transportation between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Revillagigedo, Gravina, and Pennock Islands would be affected by the various ferry and bridge alternatives being evaluated. All three of these islands contain known cultural sites.

Michael Yarborough of Cultural Resource Consultants, through HDR Alaska, Inc., is under contract to DOT&PF to lead the cultural resource efforts for the project. Cultural Resource Consultants has been in touch with your office regarding the Gravina Access Project and potential cultural sites, and has completed three on-site reconnaissance trips. The cultural resource work to date is delineated in the enclosed compilation entitled "Cultural Sites and the Gravina Access Project" (July 2003). The compilation includes a 7-page summary and several other documents produced between 2001 and 2003.

### AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT:

The enclosed compilation, on page 1 of the summary, presents the proposed Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project. A map of the APE also appears in the summary document as figure 1.

### SURVEY FINDINGS:

The enclosed compilation summary, on page 2, documents investigations to date. An archeological and historical literature review identified several prehistoric and historic sites in the

general project area. This review was followed in 2001 and 2002 by three reconnaissance-level archeological field surveys of potential bridge crossing points and ferry terminal locations. These surveys revealed three historic properties within the Alternative F1 (preferred) and Alternative F3 APE: two historic cabins on Pennock Island (KET-774); a barge, cabin, large engine, and boatway on Gravina Island (KET-775); a historic dumpsite near Tongass Highway (KET-435), and the Salamanchuk House (KET-776), which is a Craftsman-style bungalow located along the southern boundary of the City of Ketchikan at 1749 South Tongass Highway. There is also a potential house-shed-chicken coop site on Gravina Island, but this site was noted solely from a 1957 U.S. Survey plat and has not been located in the field. These five sites are associated with Alternatives F1 and F3 only. Detail is provided in the compilation summary.

#### DETERMINATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY:

DOT&PF and FHWA have determined KET-774 and KET-775 are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D as sites that contain information important for understanding a facet of Twentieth Century Alaska history. The enclosed compilation summary, on page 6, and the determinations of eligibility bound with the summary, provide detail. Pennock and Gravina Islands were the locations of significant historic occupations during the early 1900s. The archeological potential of KET-774 and KET-775 make them valuable resources for historical archaeology. These sites meet the National Register standards for integrity of archeological information.

We have determined the Salamanchuk House (KET-776) is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion A (events), Criterion B (person), Criterion C (design/construction), or Criterion D (information potential). Details are provided in the enclosed compilation summary on page 6 and in the separate determination of eligibility.

No determination of eligibility was deemed necessary for KET-435, the dumpsite, because it is only within the visual effects APE and not subject to direct physical effects. The nature of the site means there is no potential for visual effects. Similarly, no determination of eligibility was prepared for the possible house-shed-chicken coop site on Gravina Island. If it still exists, it is outside the APE for physical effects. The nature of this possible site is such that it is not subject to visual effects.

#### DETERMINATIONS OF EFFECT:

DOT&PF and FHWA have determined that neither Alternative F1 nor Alternative F3 would have an effect on KET-774 and KET-775. Although these sites are within the APE and are near the touchdown of the Alternative F1 bridges on Pennock Island and Gravina Island, the bridge would be overhead, and would be designed to avoid placement of pilings or fill within these sites. Site boundaries would be determined and marked in the field to ensure that construction access, equipment staging, and other activity did not disturb the sites. Because the sites are eligible only for their information potential, there would be no visual effects under Alternatives F1 and F3.

REQUEST FOR CONCURRENCE:

On behalf of FHWA, DOT&PF requests your concurrence with the following:

- The area of potential effect as described and mapped in the enclosed document.
- The determination that KET-774 and KET-775 *are* eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The determination that KET-776 *is not* eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The determination that no alternative would have an effect on a historic property.

If you have any questions or need additional information please call me at 465-1774 or via email at [Reuben\\_Yost@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:Reuben_Yost@dot.state.ak.us). Michael Yarborough can be reached directly at 343-3445 or via email at [archeology@acsalaska.net](mailto:archeology@acsalaska.net). Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reuben Yost", written in a cursive style.

Reuben Yost  
Special Projects Manager

Enclosures

cc: Tim Haugh, FHWA Environment & Right of Way Programs Manager  
Mark Dalton, Project Manager, HDR Alaska, Inc.



## MINUTE-MEMORANDUM

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**FROM:** Drew Sielbach

**DATE:** September 6, 2000

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**TO:** Tim Haugh

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**SUBJECT:** Review of Gravina Island Bridge Costs

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The cost estimates provided by the consultant were reviewed by Myint Lwin from the FHWA Western Resource Center and myself. Our comments on the cost estimates are given below.

- Overall the cost estimates appear to be reasonable. Comparisons were done using a cost range of \$2153/m<sup>2</sup> to \$2691/m<sup>2</sup> for post-tensioned box girder bridges up to spans of 185m; and a cost range of \$3299/m<sup>2</sup> to \$3767/m<sup>2</sup> for spans over 200m.
- Suggest giving a range of costs for the different alternatives. This would help inform the decision makers of the potential range of costs and the level of uncertainty associated with each alternative.
- Applying a constant contingency to all aspects of the project does not seem reasonable. Suggest using different contingencies based on the level of uncertainty for the specific items.  
  
For example: The costs for the post-tensioned box superstructure may be better defined than the costs for the substructure; therefore a smaller contingency rate is appropriate for the superstructure as compared to the substructure..
- Will the bridge piers adjacent to the shipping channel be designed to withstand a ship collision or will pier protection be provided? If appropriate, the costs for pier protection should be included.
- We would like to review the cost data was used to develop the costs for the post-tensioned box girder option. Please provide the actual construction cost data, span configuration, and date of construction for the bridges used to develop the estimated costs for this project.

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cc: [cc:]

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# STATE OF ALASKA

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TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7999  
PHONE: (907) 465-4428  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-4414

September 28, 1999

File Copy 07072 - 144

James A. Bryson, Realty/Environmental Officer  
Federal Highway Administration  
Alaska Division  
P O Box 21648  
Juneau AK 99802

File Topic 1 4.1.2 ☐  
File Topic 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐  
File Topic 3 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐  
File Topic 4 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐  
File Topic 5 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐  
Chron # \_\_\_\_\_

RE: Gravina Access Project - Formal request for agency scoping  
comment

Dear Mr. Bryson:

As you know the agency scoping meeting for the Gravina Access Project was held September 27, 1999 in Juneau with teleconference links to Ketchikan, Sitka and Anchorage. We appreciate your participation in the scoping process to date. We encourage you to provide comment on your agency's issues and concerns, information needs, and the potential to assist the implementation of technical studies necessary for the project's environmental analysis. At the agency scoping meeting we requested that each agency provide formal scoping comments addressed to me, at the above address and postmarked by October 13, 1999.

Ongoing agency involvement in the development of the Gravina Access Project is very important to the project team. At the agency scoping meeting we discussed the initiation of a project development team (PDT) to promote consistent local, state and federal agency participation. The first monthly Project Development Team meeting will be held November 4, 1999 in Ketchikan. We will provide teleconference facilities in Anchorage and Juneau, if needed. These meetings will focus on project development issues ranging from public involvement activities to review of draft technical reports and also provide opportunity for information exchange and the resolution of issues as they arise. We encourage your involvement in the PDT meetings. We will send you each month an

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FAX: (907) 465-4414

September 3, 1999

Susan Marthaller, Team Leader: Gravina Island Timber Sale Project  
US Forest Service  
3031 Tongass Avenue  
Ketchikan AK, 99901

Subject: Ketchikan-Gravina Access Project Agency Scoping Meeting – September 27<sup>th</sup>

Dear Ms. Marthaller:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) invites you to a scoping meeting to discuss the Ketchikan-Gravina Access Project. The project requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the agency scoping meeting is a means to solicit early input to the NEPA process.


The meeting will be held in Juneau on September 27, 1999 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Hickel Room at Centennial Hall. Invitees include the project team, state and federal resource agencies, other state and federal agencies, local governments, and affected Native organizations.

The purpose of the agency scoping meeting is to introduce the project, determine the scope of issues to be addressed in the NEPA document, discuss information needs and potential information sources and/or necessary studies, and review other related planning efforts in the project area. The project team, specifically the engineering and environmental team leaders, will present and discuss the project, the proposed schedule, and review some of the recently considered alternatives. DOT&PF has retained the services of HDR Alaska to prepare the NEPA document. Each agency will be asked to contribute thoughts about the proposed project alternatives, information your agency may be able to contribute, and your ideas for special studies.

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the interagency agreement to merge the Section 404 and NEPA processes. Prior to the meeting, you will be sent a project information packet that will include a draft purpose and need statement for the project. The fifty-day purpose and need concurrence review will be initiated upon receipt of the draft statement.

We strongly encourage you to attend in person. Early interaction with your agency will mutually benefit the project and your agency's participation in the NEPA process. If you have any questions, please call me at 465-4411 or Reuben Yost, the DOT&PF Regional Environmental Coordinator, at 465-4498.

Sincerely,

  
Al Steining, P.E.  
DOT&PF Project Manager

Attachment - Project Vicinity Map  
cc: Jerry Ingersoll, Ketchikan District Ranger  
Colleen Bentley-Grundy, Head Planning Section  
Jack Oien, Transportation Section

File Copy 07072 - 144  
File Topic 1 4.1.2 ☐  
File Topic 2 ☐  
File Topic 3 ☐  
File Topic 4 ☐  
File Topic 5 ☐  
Chron # ☐

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6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7999  
PHONE: (907) 465-4428  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-4414

September 3, 1999

Susan Marthaller, Team Leader: Gravina Island Timber Sale Project  
US Forest Service  
3031 Tongass Avenue  
Ketchikan, AK. 99901

Subject: Ketchikan-Gravina Access Project

Dear Ms. Marthaller:

As many of you know, the US Congress provided funding available in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), for a project to improve access between Ketchikan on Revillagigedo Island and neighboring Gravina Island. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has made this funding available to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) for the Gravina Access Project.

While improved access has been studied in the past, TEA-21 provides sufficient funding for the Gravina Access Project to conduct the evaluation of access alternatives required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Funding is also available to design and begin construction of the preferred alternative that FHWA approves as a result of the NEPA process. The project schedule is:

1. NEPA & permitting: 1999 — 2001
2. Design: 2001 — 2002
3. Project construction: 2002 — 2004

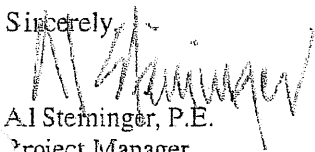
DOT&PF has retained the services of HDR Alaska to prepare the NEPA document, design the preferred alternative, and oversee the construction. HDR Alaska brings to this project a unique balance of transportation and environmental professionals experienced in developing Alaska infrastructure projects. Specifically, HDR offers:

- The most recent EIS obtained for a new Alaska road (the Whittier Access Project)
- Specialty bridge design and marine systems expertise
- A local Ketchikan project office.

HDR's Eric Keen, P.E. is the program manager and will provide project oversight throughout all phases. HDR's Mark Dalton is the project manager and will coordinate the NEPA process. Work begins with an agency scoping meeting September 27 in Juneau and a public scoping meeting in Ketchikan October 6. Mark and Eric can be reached in Juneau at 586-9833 or toll-free outside Juneau at 1-888-520-4886.

The DOT&PF and our consultant HDR Alaska will do everything possible to involve affected or potentially affected individuals, groups, corporations, institutions, agencies, and public officials in this important project. We will be providing you project information and asking for your input in the near future when we begin a series of scoping meetings. I encourage your participation; please contact me at 465-4411 or Reuben Yost, the DOT&PF Regional Environmental Coordinator, at 465-4498 for more information.

Sincerely,

  
A.J. Sterninger, P.E.  
Project Manager

cc: Jerry Ingersoll, Ketchikan District Ranger  
Colleen Bentley-Grundy, Head Planning Section  
Jack Oien, Transportation Section



# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

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SOUTHEAST REGION - DESIGN

07072-144/4.1.2

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7999  
PHONE: (907) 465-4428  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-4414

February 10, 2003

Re: Gravina Access Project  
Project No. 67698

Mr. David Miller, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
Alaska Division  
709 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 851  
Juneau, Alaska 99801


Dear David:

Enclosed are four (4) copies of the Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (PDEIS) for the Gravina Access Project, Project No. 67698. The Department is submitting these copies for FHWA review and comment.

The document identifies a preferred alternative, F1, which would construct two bridges: a 200-foot clearance of the East Channel; and a 120-foot clearance of the West Channel. Road connections to the South Tongass Highway, the Ketchikan International Airport, and to developable land on Gravina Island are included within the alternative.

This project is of the highest priority to the Department and the Ketchikan community. The Department requests that your staff reviews this document and provides preliminary comments as soon as possible, preferably by the end of February. Final review meetings would be scheduled for March. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Department's representative, Roger Healy at 465-1821, or the Department's Regional Environmental Coordinator, Reuben Yost at 465-4498.

Sincerely,

  
for

Pat Kemp, P.E.  
Preconstruction Engineer

cc: Mike Downing, P.E., Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Mark Dalton, HDR Alaska

## STATE OF ALASKA

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

January 17, 2001

Linda Shaw  
Protected Resources  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, AK 99802

Subject: Gravina Access Project, ADOT&PF Project 67698  
Alternatives Concurrence (by February 19, 2001)

Dear Ms. Shaw:

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) to request concurrence with the alternatives to be considered in the environmental impact statement for the Gravina Access Project.

This concurrence is required of several agencies as part of a June 11, 1997, interagency agreement for merging the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with the NEPA requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its Section 404 permitting process. Enclosed for your review are materials describing the alternatives to be studied in detail in the NEPA document for the project and the concurrence form. [The concurrence form is also available electronically (Microsoft Word 6.0): please let me know by phone or e-mail if you would like it in an electronic format and I will send it to you via e-mail or regular mail on a disc.] Please review the alternatives and indicate your concurrence on the form. The merger agreement appears to assume that all signatory agencies will respond to a concurrence request; there is no provision for non-response.

Your agency previously reviewed a written statement of purpose and need for the Gravina Access Project. This was sent early last year with a letter requesting concurrence on the project's purpose and need. The purpose of the project, located in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough in Southeast Alaska, is to improve surface transportation between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island. The concurring agencies all concurred with the project purpose and need. The purpose and need for the project have not changed since that concurrence process was completed.

As explained further in the enclosed material, alternatives for the Gravina Access Project to be considered in the NEPA document are:

- The "no-action" alternative.
- Alternative C3, a modified high-level bridge from the airport area to Signal Road.
- Alternative C4, a modified high-level bridge from the airport area to the Cambria Drive area.
- Alternative D1, a low-level bridge at the airport area.

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

3132 CHANNEL DRIVE  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7898

TEXT : (907) 465-3652  
FAX : (907) 588-8365  
PHONE : (907) 465-3900

September 29, 2000

K.A. Swiger  
Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 5957  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Dear Ms. Swiger:

Thank you for your letter of September 15. The Gravina Access Project continues to be of great importance and interest to the Department. The project must comply with Federal Highway Administration's requirements: notably, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. A basic part of the NEPA process is public involvement, and the Chamber is an important voice for the project. Thank you for your contribution.

Local input is very important to the Department. We are seeking community comments on the 18 alternatives to determine those that should be studied further. As you know, the alternatives were first presented to the community in January 2000. We are not, however, trying to identify a preferred alternative at this time. There will be other opportunities for the community to weigh in on what alternative should be ultimately selected.

The Department and its consultant, HDR Alaska, have made aggressive attempts to garner public comment. The scoping process was initiated a year ago and, as you know, since that time we have met on various occasions with: the Assemblies of the City of Ketchikan and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough; the Marine Pilots Association; Ketchikan aviation groups; the Chamber of Commerce; Cruise Line agencies; City and Borough staff; the Project Development Team; and members of the public during several special events. In addition, HDR has established a project web site, a Ketchikan project office, a Mall information booth, and an Airport kiosk. These efforts have been expensive and very effective in soliciting public comment.

In addition to local input, the Department and HDR are evaluating the alternatives to determine their "reasonableness." I interpret reasonable to mean prudent in terms of engineering, cost, and environmental issues, including purpose and need. The U.S. Congress and the Alaska Legislature determine final appropriation limits. However, one of the Department's duties is to provide those legislative leaders concise and reasonable analysis and recommendations for statewide transportation funding. A "sky's the limit" response sidesteps our obligation. As previously stated, my view is that Gravina crossing alternatives exceeding \$150 million are not reasonable. I maintain that this is a prudent

K.A. Swiger

Page 2

September 29, 2000

recommendation. There is no commitment of future funding implied in the ceiling. Currently, no project funding exists beyond the current \$20.4 million.

You mentioned the local match requirement. The Gravina Island Access Improvement project is one of seventeen high priority projects awarded to the State of Alaska by TEA-21. The awards were a result of direct communication by local governments within Alaska to our Congressional delegation. In the case of the Gravina Island, it was a direct and exclusive request from the Ketchikan Borough. High priority funding is a separate and distinct funding outside the normal allocations to our State DOT/PF. It carries with it a 20% local match. The Department has committed to providing State General Fund monies for the local match through the present high priority project only. We have not advocated or promised to provide local match through the construction phase. At this point, it appears as appropriate that the local government be willing to participate in a project of their making or that the Legislature allocate General Fund monies for this project's "local" match. In most of our active High Priority projects in Alaska the local match is being borne by the local authority originally requesting the funding. In any event, that scenario is far from certain, and proceeding through the public involvement process without informing the Ketchikan citizens of plausible financial obligations would be misleading.

The NEPA process requires detailed environmental, engineering, economic, and social analyses of each reasonable alternative. We expect the environmental and design phases to cost considerably less than the \$20.4 available. The number of reasonable alternatives to consider has not been determined; hence, estimation of the extent and cost of further studies is not precise. This is another reason why I do not support funding more study of expensive alternatives that are not reasonable. The Department and HDR will continue to economize project funds as long as the legally mandated NEPA process is not compromised. Project success is dependent upon accurate and deliberate NEPA documentation.

I appreciate your interest and support. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. Perkins, P.E.  
Commissioner